Current Listing of the Claims

Claims 1-10 (Cancelled).

11. (Original) A fuel cell assembly, comprising:

a) at least one fuel cell stack;

b) a supporting structure surrounding said fuel cell stack; and

c) a gas spring disposed within said assembly between said stack and said supporting structure, said spring including a first membrane, a second membrane, means for sealing edges of said first and second membranes to define a closed chamber therebetween for capture of gas, first valve means for admitting gas to said chamber, and second valve means for exhausting gas from said chamber.

12. (Original) A fuel cell assembly in accordance with Claim 11 wherein said fuel cell stack includes at least one solid-oxide fuel cell.

13. (Original) A fuel cell assembly comprising:

a) at least one fuel cell stack;

b) a supporting structure surrounding said fuel cell stack; and

c) gas spring means disposed within said assembly between said stack and said supporting structure, said gas spring means defining a closed chamber

and including an inlet valve for admitting gas into said chamber and an outlet valve for exhausting gas from said chamber.

14. (Previously presented) A fuel cell assembly in accordance with Claim 11 wherein said means for sealing includes direct sealing of said first membrane to said second membrane to form a gas-filled pillow.

15. (Previously presented) A fuel cell assembly in accordance with Claim 11 wherein said means for sealing includes a rigid frame element disposed between said first and second membranes.

16. (Previously presented) A fuel cell assembly in accordance with Claim 15 wherein said frame element has a trough-shaped cross section.

17. (Previously presented) A fuel cell assembly in accordance with Claim 16 wherein said trough shape is radially concave.

18. (Previously presented) A fuel cell assembly in accordance with Claim 16 wherein said trough shape is radially convex.

19. (Previously presented) A fuel cell assembly in accordance with Claim 11 wherein said first valve means is a check valve.

20. (Previously presented) A fuel cell assembly in accordance with Claim 11 wherein said second valve means is a check valve.

21. (Previously presented) A fuel cell assembly, comprising:

a) at least one fuel cell stack;

b) a supporting structure surrounding said fuel cell stack;

c) a gas spring disposed within said assembly between said stack and said supporting structure, said spring including a membrane defining a gas chamber;

d) a first valve positioned in said membrane for admitting gas to said chamber; and

e) a second valve positioned in said membrane for exhausting gas from said chamber.

22. (Previously presented) A fuel cell assembly in accordance with Claim 21 wherein said membrane includes a first membrane and a second membrane.

23. (Previously presented) A fuel cell assembly in accordance with Claim 22 further comprising a seal for sealing edges of said first and second membranes.

24. (Previously presented) A fuel cell assembly in accordance with Claim 23 wherein said seal includes a rigid frame element disposed between said first and second membranes.

25. (Previously presented) A fuel cell assembly in accordance with Claim 24 wherein said frame element has a trough-shaped cross section.

26. (Previously presented) A fuel cell assembly in accordance with Claim 25 wherein said trough shape is radially concave.

27. (Previously presented) A fuel cell assembly in accordance with Claim 25 wherein said trough shape is radially convex.

28. (Previously presented) A fuel cell assembly in accordance with Claim 21 wherein said first valve is a check valve.

29. (Previously presented) A fuel cell assembly in accordance with Claim 21 wherein said second valve is a check valve.

30. (Previously presented) A fuel cell assembly, comprising:

a) at least one fuel cell stack;

b) a supporting structure surrounding said fuel cell stack;

c) a gas spring disposed within said assembly between said stack and said supporting structure, said spring including a membrane defining a gas chamber, wherein said gas within said closed chamber is at a first pressure;

d) a first valve positioned in said membrane for admitting gas to said chamber from an exterior of said gas spring; and

e) a second valve positioned in said membrane for exhausting gas from said chamber into said exterior, wherein said exterior is at a second pressure.

31. (Previously presented) A fuel cell assembly in accordance with Claim 30 wherein said second pressure is ambient air pressure.